

Communities of Opportunity Design Committee

Lessons learned, recorded at the last meeting on 10/8/14, White Center CDA

Attendees: Alice Ito, Seattle Foundation; Paola Maranan, Children's Alliance; Gordon McHenry, Solid Ground; Sili Savusa, White Center CDA; Dinah Wilson, City of Kent; Jennifer Martin, The Seattle Foundation; Aaron Robertson, The Seattle Foundation; Judy de Barros, Program Consultant for Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N), The Seattle Foundation; Bao-Tram, Seattle Foundation; Nadine Chan, Public Health-Seattle & King County; Deb Srebnik, King County Department of Community and Human Services; Kirsten Wysen, Public Health – Seattle & King County



What worked?

We stayed focused on what we're trying to accomplish since 2013, the Design Committee focused on how. Institutions stayed focused.

Braided funding, resources from many sources versus siloed approaches.

With power differentials in the room, it worked.

Why? Spoken & unspoken communication.

Clear, concise, transparent, be open, frankness.

We gained more allies in and out of institutions to support community-driven work.

County acknowledgment of Communities of Opportunity in the levy.

We practiced "unlearning."

New people came to table, got to know each other.

Well-organized policy/systems change review process was adaptable to large number of proposals.

Seattle Foundation & King County learned during the review process.

Seattle Foundation & King County did a self-check on working with communities.

Community organizations gained more info about institutions.

Things were called out, KC & TSF could do things differently

Product resulted in real involvement, to change processes, communicate out. It would be great if the institutions made these changes more normal. Note this!

Unpack & address issues.

Next time – ground rules would be useful.

What didn't work so well, what needed to be unlearned?

Spell out government concerns about what to fund for policy and systems changes, up front.

Be transparent.

Be clear about how decisions or consensus are reached.

Dominating voices.

Role clarity – consensus or King County and Seattle Foundation decision-making?

Offer real ways to catch up when people can't attend meetings.

Study this case, present the approach as a way to demonstrate changes to "business as usual."

Next time use metrics on community participation.

Co-design recommendations:

- Clarify the change(s), do root cause analysis before jumping to solutions.
- Position ourselves as resources to communities: e.g. help by finding data they need.
- Due to constraints of the county as a public entity, the work cannot be completely community-driven, yet will be co-designed.
- Building capacity from community perspective is necessary in order to achieve systems change, and in order to sustain that change.
- Positioning of King Co and TSF as facilitators and help support the successful collaborations and future sustainability.
- In addition to 3 sites, must plan for larger learning community and relevance to county as a whole.
- Interim Governance Group – can begin establishing guides for ongoing and future resources, processes, best practices, etc.
- Provide technical assistance to communities. Offer a range of supports. Can include high tech, low tech, logistical help, etc. Sometimes very basic help can make the difference.
 - Building trust; addressing potential tension among those at the table (and others).
 - Attend to bringing people together and keeping them engaged.
- Provide introductions; connect people, facilitate relationships.
- Formalize information and processes for access and communication among participants, funders, etc.
- Be conscious about internalizing changes within institutions – (a community member won't always be available).
- Consider "TA – light" – coaching: short term, hands-on assistance as needed. Not necessarily a big time-investment in TA time that will drain the group.